

ROSEDOWN PLANTATION
ST. FRANCISVILLE
WEST FELICIANA PARISH
LOUISIANA

HABS No. LA. 1101

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Louisiana

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Richard Koch, District Officer
Queen and Crescent Building, New Orleans, Louisiana

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ROSEDOWN PLANTATION
St. Francisville West Feliciana Parish Louisiana

Owner: Mrs. Milton R. Underwood

Date of Erection: 1835 - Wings: 1844-45

Builder: Daniel Turnbull

Architect and Contractor: Wendell Wright - Main House
T. S. Williams - Wings

Present Condition: Badly in need of repairs. (Plans are being made for its restoration).

Number of Stories: Two and Attic.

Materials of Construction: Brick foundations, wood walls with clapboards; original roof - shingle; at present - composition.

Other existing records:

Great Georgian Houses of America, Volume II.
Architects Emergency Committee.
The Scribner Press, New York, 1937.
Lyle Saxon, Old Louisiana; the Century Co., 1929.
Various magazines.

Owner has a unique and very complete record of monies spent for materials, statuary, etc., in connection with the building of the house.

ROSEDOWN PLANTATION
St. Francisville West Feliciana Parish Louisiana

No house in Louisiana gives a better idea of an old Louisiana plantation home than does Rosedown, built at the end of an avenue of oaks. Between these oaks is marble statuary, copies of well known classical works bought in Italy by the Turnbulls in 1851. On each side of the avenue is a Victorian garden laid out in a Victorian manner reminiscent of the French naturalistic gardens of that date. The two summer houses in these gardens were built in 1895. To the right of the house is a box garden similar to many in this area that were done in the 20's and is a reflection of late Eighteenth Century box gardens of Virginia. The small summer house in the center of this garden built in 1835, with an earlier feeling, is sympathetic in its Greek Revival detail.

In 1844 and 45 wings were added to the north and south of the building by T.S. Williams, and it is a tradition that the factory work came from Cincinnati. On the north of the house is a kitchen that is no doubt earlier and was moved up to the main house at unknown dates. On the east is another wing that was added in 1859. Around the grounds are various dependencies such as a privy, milk-house, wood shed and office.

The owner has the original plan of the house drawn on a sheet of writing paper. A main entrance hall with an elliptical stair to the second floor, a parlor to the right and a large bedroom to the left. To the rear is the dining room. This plan might be called French or Early Louisiana in contrast to the American scheme of a hall through the center of the house.

The following is an extract from one of the many papers relating to the building:

"Proposition for doing the Carpenter and Joined work of a certain frame house the whole to be Compleete after the most modern Stile the front to be Executed with full gretio dorric Collums and Cornice the inside to be finished throughout the two Stories Compleete one finish above the Second Story nor dormer windows the workman Ship and Stile not to be Surpassed in the State all the materials to be furnished on the ground or at the place whare the building

is to be built or Set up (by the employer) For the
Sum of Seven thousand five Hundred dollars . or may
be measured at the Cincinnati Book of prices or valued
by Competent Mechanics of the Country, with any one I
Shall be Satisfied

W Wright"

Fortunately the owners have been able to purchase
most of the original furnishings - a unique collection of Victorian
furniture. These are now being catalogued. Two portraits by Sully of
the builders now belong to the house and over the mantel in the dining
room was a most interesting painting of James Pirrie Bowman, the son-
in-law of Daniel Turnbull - by Aman.

Rosedown was bought in 1956 from the Estate of
Miss Rosin Benoist Bowman by Mrs. Underwood of Houston, who is making
long-range plans for the restoration of the house and garden.

Prepared by Richard Koch, Architect
June, 1958